# A

# SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

## GLOCESTERSHIRE SOCIETY,

AT ST. JAMES'S IN BRISTOL,

ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1781.

---

BY THE REV. P. M. CORNWALL, A.M.
LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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*SARUM:*
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TO

THOMAS ESTCOURT, ESQUIRE,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE

GLOCESTERSHIRE SOCIETY,

THE FOLLOWING SERMON,

IS MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS MUCH OBLIGED SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

MINCHIN-HAMPTON, Nov. 8, 1781.

# To the Rev. P. M. CORNWALL.

*Dear Sir,*

*INCLOSED is a draft for five guineas, which I beg your acceptance of, as a ſmall return for the very excellent diſcourſe you gave us at Briſtol; and for which I return you my ſincere thanks. It was univerſally approved of by the gentlemen preſent at the meeting; and I could wiſh very much you would give it the public, if I was not afraid that the expence of printing, &c. (in an age like the preſent, when the extent of people's reading in general, is confined to a news-paper, or a racing calendar) would bring on you an expence and trouble, that might prove inconvenient to you: Of this, however, you are a better judge than I can be.*

*I am, dear Sir,*

*Your moſt obedient humble Servant,*

T. ESTCOURT.

ESTCOURT-HOUSE, Oct. 25, 1781.

20 JY 63

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20 JY 63

St. JAMES, Chap. 2, Ver. 15, 16, 17.

*If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and be deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

THE only way to enjoy our earthly treaſures is, to put them to that uſe, for which God who is the maker both of rich and poor, graciouſly deſigned them; and for which men are very apt to ſay, that they wiſhed to have them in their poſſeſſion; namely, to furniſh ourſelves and our families with the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life, and to beſtow all our ſuperfluities in acts of beneficence and charity; to cloath the naked, and to feed the hungry; to help and raiſe them whoſe ingenuous modeſty conceals their calamities and misfortunes from the world as much as poſſible; to be good friends, and kind comforters to all who do, and may, at any time, ſtand in need of our aſſiſtance and conſolation. If, whilſt our affairs proſpered, we never loſt ſight of this moſt pious and laudable intention, our luxuries could never lead us into ſuch wild extravagance, as would injure our eſtates and fortunes; and prevent us from contributing that relief and ſuccour to the afflicted and diſtreſſed, which in our pathetic moods, we propoſed as our chief delight and pleaſure.

Such a diſtribution of our riches is far unlike the mad profuſion of them in gaming, and other moſt uſeleſs, ſinful, and ruinous amuſements and diverſions. For, beſides yielding eaſe and comfort to thoſe who are in diſtreſs and miſery, it will fill and ſatisfy our minds, not with a momentary fading joy, which conſtantly ends in ſhame, ſorrow, and vexation of ſpirit, but with the moſt ſolid, permanent, and heart-felt pleaſures; which will continue with us, our moſt chearful companions in all the various ſcenes of this life, and follow us to encreaſe the beauty, and the luſtre of our crown in Heaven.

A covetous greedy worldling, and a licentious vain prodigal, can never taſte that ſweet complacency, which continually ſprings up in his breaſt, who is generouſly, and nobly employed, as a true diſciple of the merciful and bleſſed Jeſus ought to be, in contriving, ſeeking, and embracing joyfully all opportunities, to further and promote the happineſs and welfare of mankind. For lo! if the worldling does a kind and compaſſionate deed for an object in diſtreſs, whom he meets, or hears of, it is, as it were, forcibly extorted from him, though perhaps he gives or ſends, only a mite to his unfortunate neighbour; and if the prodigal ſhould pity, and relieve one who is in neceſſity, it is rather to get rid of his importunities, which offend his delicate ears, which are accuſtomed *to other ſounds and voices*, than out of a brotherly love and affection for him. But it is too common with this ſort of believers, when they are addreſſed by any perſons in want and miſery, to ſhew their mercy, as they do their faith, in words only; and very civilly, and courteouſly, to ſay—we are moſt ſincerely concerned for your unhappy

unhappy ſituation, but you muſt apply to others, who can better afford to help and relieve you. Reflect, thou, who heapeſt up, and hideſt, thy wealth; and thou, who doſt wickedly conſume, and waſte it upon thy devouring luſts and vanities, that we are accountable to God for the uſe which we have made of this talent, wherewith he has entruſted us. Conſider all ye, who glory in your faith, and diſregard the miſeries and the troubles of your fellow creatures, that, as your fair, and ſoft ſpeeches are of no uſe to them, ſo your boaſted faith will be of no ſervice or advantage to you.

*If a brother, or ſiſter be naked, and be deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? and then follows this, even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.* In diſcourſing upon this ſubject, I propoſe to conſider theſe four things.

1ſt. The great difference between the perſuaſion of being ſaved for works, which can be acceptable to God, only through faith in Chriſt; and the expectation of not being ſaved without works, according to which every man will be judged.

2dly. The doctrine of the two apoſtles, St. Paul, and St. James, concerning faith and works.

3dly. The very ſtrong recommendation of the practice of univerſal benevolence and charity, in the examples of the good Samaritan, and the religious Gentile, Cornelius.

4thly. and laſtly. The good example of this ſociety, who let their light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee their good works, and glorify our Father who is in Heaven.

1ſt. I am to conſider the great difference between the perſuaſion of being ſaved for works, which can be acceptable to God, only through faith in Chriſt; and the expectation of not being ſaved without works, according to which every man will be judged. The boldeſt and moſt ſtrenuous advocates for natural religion, cannot but ſee, that all the world is become guilty before God; and that except his Juſtice be ſatisfied, we cannot be delivered from the terrible wrath which is to come. If ſuch men have any modeſty and humility left, they will certainly grant that none ever had, or can have, ſufficient merit in themſelves to make this great atonement, and therefore will eaſily admit that the omniſcient God alone ſhould appoint to us the terms of peace and reconciliation with him. The terms of our acceptance with him, he hath been pleaſed to reveal to us by his beloved ſon Jeſus, in whom, God declared from Heaven, that he was well pleaſed. And they are theſe, viz. To believe, and truſt in Jeſus Chriſt, as the author, and finiſher of our redemption; and to renounce all merit in our own works, to procure us this moſt ineſtimable of all benefits, and bleſſings; and to expreſs our love and gratitude to Chriſt, our Lord and Saviour, for having completely wrought this wonderful work for us, by obſerving, and performing, whatſoever he hath commanded us, particularly works of mercy. We cannot therefore, if we reflect at all upon our innumerable defects and infirmities, preſume to rely upon our own works (be they ever ſo

good

good and righteous in appearance to us) for pardon and ſalvation. Becauſe (as our Lord himſelf tells us in this reſpect) when we have done all thoſe things which are commanded us, we are unprofitable ſervants, we have only done that, which it was our duty to do, although we had never ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God. And we cannot expect to be ſaved without works; becauſe whoſoever has faith in Jeſus, or profeſſeth to believe the goſpel, is moſt ſtrictly bound to order his whole life and converſation by its doctrines and precepts, which are holy, juſt, and good; and it ſhould be remembered, that one of its plaineſt doctrines is, *that every man will be judged according to his works; which, if they are good, will be accepted, for his ſake in whom he believed.* For ſuppoſing that any man ſhould form his conduct by theſe ſafeſt and wiſeſt inſtructions, he will, upon mature reflection, diſcern that the religious and virtuous life, which he now lives, *he lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himſelf for him.* Do but enquire of this man, why doſt thou lead this kind of life, ſo contrary and oppoſite to the manners of the world in general? And he will aſſign this excellent reaſon for it; becauſe I am thoroughly ſatisfied of the truth of the promiſes, and firmly believe, and fear the threatenings of the goſpel; which is not *a dead letter*, but, to all *obedient* chriſtians, the *word of reconciliation*, the good news of eternal life and happineſs.

I proceed to conſider, 2dly. The doctrine of the two apoſtles, St. Paul, and St. James, concerning faith and works. The former contends for the efficacy and influence of faith, againſt the righteouſneſs of the law of works, or the moſaical diſpenſation; which

many

many conceited Jews pretended was perfect enough for all the purpoſes of juſtification and ſalvation. The latter ſtrives for the neceſſity of performing works agreeable to the chriſtian diſpenſation, againſt that moſt abſurd notion of being juſtified and ſaved by faith only; which many wicked people, who eſteemed themſelves the diſciples of our Saviour, maintained, as it moſt evidently appears, to cover, and excuſe, their diſhoneſt, violent, and unrighteous dealing.

1ſt. St. Paul begins his epiſtle to the Romans, with acquainting them with the remarkable difference between the power and influence of the goſpel, and of natural religion, and the law of Moſes; he declares the firſt to be ſufficient of itſelf to reſtore us to the favour and mercy of God; but he deſcribes the two laſt, as too weak and deficient in many reſpects; and brings ſome very ſad inſtances to ſhew that the corruption and depravity of mankind, were not to be overcome by the arguments and motives afforded by the Light of Nature, or of the Jewiſh Religion. Concerning the Gentiles, who were guided by the Light of Nature only, he ſpeaks thus; when they, (not the ſtupid and unlearned, but even they) who profeſſed themſelves wiſe, knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened. Seeing this was their caſe, the ſhocking relation of their wickedneſs that follows, is rather to be expected, than to be wondered at. As to the Jews, who valued themſelves moſt highly upon their deſcent from Abraham, and being Moſes's diſciples, St. Paul, reaſonably aſks, doſt thou, who art called a Jew, and makeſt thy boaſt of the law,

through

through breaking the law, affront and diſhonour God? For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. Your advantages muſt be allowed to be very great; which render your condition, not the better, but the worſe, for abuſing them in the manner you do. The heavenly oracles were committed to you: but who that compares your conduct with the rule given you for it, will not think that you, and the Gentiles whom ye ſcorn, are upon the ſame footing? If they cannot be juſtified, who had the leaſt, how ſhall ye be juſtified who had the greateſt light? However, let each man try and examine his own heart; the Jew by the law of Moſes, and the Gentile by the light of nature; and what will be the reſult? Conſcience will not acquit either of you. But if ye are condemned at this, who will juſtify you at God's tribunal? Ye muſt have either an inherent, or an imputed righteouſneſs, if ye hope to be juſtified there. Your own minds aſſure you that ye have not the former; and by what method will ye acquire the latter? Caſt away your groundleſs hope and confidence in the law, which convinces you of ſin, and threatens you with intolerable puniſhment; be no longer blinded by your pride and obſtinacy; but own, and receive Chriſt Jeſus; for God is the juſtifier of him who believeth in Jeſus; take your father Abraham for an example; and walk in the ſteps of his faith; remember that the moſaical diſpenſation was nothing to him; for it did not then exiſt; neither did he build upon his own conſpicuous virtues, which he rightly conſidered not as merits, but as duties; which, if God thought fit to reward, he did it freely, not of debt, but of grace. The law of works is now of no more concern to you, than it was then to Abraham, for if ye are juſtified at

all,

all, ye muſt be ſo by faith, without the deeds of the law. I do not mean the law of Chriſt, but of Moſes. For if we ought formerly to pay obedience to him, who was only the ſervant, much more ſhould we now do it to him, who is the only begotton Son of God, and our Lord and Maſter. Therefore reſolve henceforth to reſt, not in the law of works, but in the law of faith; and think it not a light and trifling matter, that God will impute righteouſneſs to you upon this condition, if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. For with the heart, man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth, confeſſion is made unto ſalvation. But that we ſhould clearly apprehend that this faith, which he magnifies, was altogether worthy of the high character which he gives it; he takes ſpecial care to inform us, that the fruits which would naturally flow from it, are ſuch as theſe; mercy, love, induſtry, piety, charity, kindneſs to our enemies, joy in the proſperity, and pity and concern in the troubles and adverſities of others; unanimity, humility, contentedneſs, modeſty, peace, fidelity and obedience to good princes and magiſtrates. So that any one may perceive, if he lays aſide fond notions and prejudices, that St. Paul's argument againſt the law of works, is ſo far from being a prejudice to, that it only ſtrengthens and confirms, the neceſſity of performing good works under the law of faith; which, although a law of grace, nevertheleſs does, as he himſelf often tells us, not only teach, but peremptorily enjoin men to cultivate, and improve, and abound in all graces and virtues.

2dly. Thoſe who conceive that St. James, who contends for the

the neceſſity of performing works agreeable to the chriſtian faith, treats of being juſtified by ſuch works in the ſight of men only, do not, I fear, rightly comprehend his meaning, when he aſks what doth it profit, though a man ſay, He hath faith, and have not works: Can faith ſave him? Doubtleſs he has a more important meaning than this. Can faith alone preſerve his fame and reputation in the world? He ſeems to allude to that paſſage of Chriſt's ſermon in the mount, where he ſays, ye ſhall know them by their fruits; ye ſhall diſcern by men's actions, who are falſe, and who are true and ſincere: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles? Even ſo every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit, a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire. There is indeed a probability of his alluding to the fig-tree, which our Lord ſaw in the way; and when he came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, he ſaid unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And preſently the fig-tree withered away.——But the perſons with whom St. James diſputes, produced more than leaves, even fruits of the moſt pernicious quality. Scorn, contempt, and oppreſſion of the poor; blaſphemy, gratification of their appetites and paſſions, in ſpite of the royal law according to the ſcriptures: Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. And ſuch polite inhumanity, as could ſee a brother, or a ſiſter periſhing for want of food and raiment, and beſtow no other comfort and relief upon them than—vain good words—depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled. And moreover this ſtrange maxim, or conceit, which

they moſt ſtiffly, and impiouſly ſupported, that provided they had the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Lord of Glory, it was no matter what their works were; becauſe their faith alone would ſave them. But how would their faith ſave them? Would it clear up, and juſtify, their wicked and unmerciful proceedings to the world? No. The World has more *Grace*, and ſenſe, and reaſon than to mind empty profeſſions. This is the plain, and proper language of the world: If you would perſuade us that your faith is good, fixed and rooted in your heart, let your actions and your profeſſions agree together; otherwiſe your faith will be of no value or account with us. Had this apoſtle really intended nothing more than this, that a dead ſpiritleſs faith would not juſtify us before men; methinks he had but little need to make this very ſerious remark, almoſt directly after his queſtion: Thou believeſt that there is one God; thou doeſt well. Can thy barren faith ſave thee with him, who is infinitely wiſer and juſter, as well as kinder than men? Conſider,—The Devils alſo believe—and tremble. Thy faith and their's has too near a reſemblance, and except thou doſt ſpeedily repent, and adorn thy faith by ſuitable works of goodneſs and mercy, thou wilt, e're long, be in their miſerable condition. Thy ſoul, when thou goeſt hence, inſtead of being conveyed into paradiſe, to enjoy the bliſs and tranquility of Enoch, Abraham, Moſes, Elias, Lazarus, and the penitent thief, ſhall awake in the flames and torments of that diſmal region, where naked, unregenerated ſpirits feel moſt ſenſibly the ſtings of conſcience, and do remain, with the hard-hearted, uncharitable rich man, expecting the completion of their doom in the Day of Judgment. But perhaps ſome men will ſay, Does not the ſoul ſleep? Go, conſult with the

man

man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief, ariſing from a troubled, and a wounded ſpirit, for not having done good in his generation; attend to his opinion concerning this matter; and mark well, how anxiouſly willing he is rather to be at home in the body, than preſent with the Lord. Therefore I repeat, and inſiſt upon this ſcriptural doctrine, that when the ſouls of hardened impenitent ſinners, (eſpecially of the covetous whom God abhorreth) are, as they ſoon muſt, and will be, upon the wing for eternity, they would give the whole world, if they had it, and it was not too late, in charity to the poor, to deliver themſelves from painful reflections, and reſtore peace and quiet to their affrighted and diſturbed minds. Here ends the power of *death*—it kills thy body, but it cannot kill thy ſoul. Conſider then, O vain man, before the night cometh, when thou canſt not work to any uſeful and happy purpoſe, for the redemption of thy *immortal* ſoul, that faith, without good works, cannot juſtify, and ſave thee before God.—— Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar? His only, and moſt dearly beloved ſon, who was to be the ſource of infinite bleſſings to all nations? Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works? and by works was faith made perfect. And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs. And he was called the friend of God. Ye ſee then how that by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only. —It may indeed be aſked, by what works was Abraham juſtified? Even by ſuch as were the effects of that faith which he had in the promiſes, which he had ſeen afar off, and was perſuaded of them, and embraced them.——The law was four hundred and thirty

years after the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt. As therefore the law cannot diſannul the covenant, it can hardly be ſuppoſed that the covenant itſelf makes void the condition, which is holineſs of life, upon which the inheritance of the promiſes is ſuſpended. It can therefore be demonſtrated that both the Apoſtles do perfectly agree together *in maintaining obedience to the faith among them who are the called of Jeſus Chriſt.*

3dly. I ſhall, in the next place, repreſent to you, how very ſtrongly the practice of univerſal benevolence and charity is recommended to us in the examples of the good Samaritan, and the religious Gentile, Cornelius: Which, unqueſtionably, are written for our imitation. The Lord Jeſus himſelf, by whom the Apoſtles were ſent to convert mankind to the faith, hath admoniſhed us that—whoſoever ſhall break one of the leaſt of his commandments, ſhall not be admitted into the kingdom of Heaven. Surely then it will be much harder for him, who ſhall break, and teach men to break, one of the greateſt of them, to get thither. But this he reckons one of the greateſt of them, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. And that we might never be at a loſs to know who is our neighbour, he hath fully inſtructed us whom we muſt reckon ſuch, in the parable of the good and compaſſionate Samaritan. None were, or could be, greater enemies to one another than the Jews and Samaritans; and no enmity and hatred could have a worſe, and more laſting cauſe than their's had, even *political and religious diſputes and prejudices.* But this good Samaritan had little, or no regard to them; as we may judge from his amiable and liberal conduct to the poor dying Jew, who muſt, in all probability,

bability, have expired shortly, if he had not stopped with, and taken care of him. Therefore, although the Priest and Levite *may be allowed* to have believed in one God, they had not, for they deserved not, either of them, the *fair title* of neighbour to their distressed brother, whom they had the curiosity to view, and the cruelty to leave in his most helpless, and wretched condition. The lawyer therefore, who also believed in the one true God, most justly determined, that the Samaritan only, was neighbour to him, who fell amongst the barbarous thieves, because he had observed a principal duty of religion, in having shewed mercy to him. Upon this our Saviour replied, Go, and do thou likewise. Go thou, who dost acknowledge that thou art to love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself: Go, and imitate this generous Samaritan. Demonstrate thy faith in, and love of God, and thy neighbour, by thy good and merciful deeds; extend thy bounty, and loving kindness to strangers, and enemies, as well as to thy brethren and friends, (and they are to be first relieved, who deserve, and want thy help most) and, by this method, thou shalt come to inherit eternal life.——Can ye believe that our blessed Lord, whose whole pleasure and delight consisted in performing works of goodness and charity to the souls and bodies of men; and who so highly approved, and recommended this Samaritan's disinterested benevolence and compassion, will justify, and save those *nominal outside christians who despise, and hate, and will not assist and relieve many of their unfortunate brethren, because they happen to stand with opposite parties in politics, and with different sects in opinions about religion?* I say, *in opinions about religion;*

*religion*; becauſe I cannot underſtand how we, who profeſs *one faith, and one baptiſm*, can, with any propriety, be ſaid, to be of *various religions*.

Amongſt the heathens there was an infinity of opinions, and a multiplicity of Gods, but nevertheleſs all their abſurd notions, and forms of worſhip, are only denominated the *Pagan religion*.

The other more famous inſtance, than that of the humane Samaritan, of the pleaſure which God takes in him, who delights to be exerciſing himſelf in the good works of piety and devotion towards his bountiful creator, and beneficent liberality to the poor and needy, is Cornelius the Gentile, who was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his houſe, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway: And therefore an Angel appeared to him to aſſure him that his prayers, and his alms were come up for a memorial before God; and alſo to acquaint him, to whom he ſhould apply for inſtructions, how he ſhould behave for the future, that he might obtain the remiſſion of his ſins, (from which the very beſt men are not free) and the ſalvation of his ſoul, through faith in the Lord Jeſus. St. Peter alſo, to whom he ſtraightway applied, had a viſion, and command from Heaven, to go with the meſſengers of Cornelius, and to preach theſe glad tidings of comfort and joy to him: Which Cornelius and his company no ſooner heard, than, by the grace of God, they were happily converted and baptized, firſt—with the Holy Ghoſt, and then —with water, in the name of the three moſt Holy Perſons, who are of the ſame ſpiritual nature, or Jehovah alone.

Let

Let us therefore moſt ſeriouſly conſider, if the piety, and goodneſs, and other virtues of this Gentile, were ſo acceptable to God, that he vouchſafed him the honour of a meſſage from Heaven by an Angel, to declare his approbation of them; and ordered the Apoſtle in like manner to go and preach the goſpel to him; and poured out the gift of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, for a reward of his good and profitable works, (I mean works profitable to the poor) how extremely pleaſed and delighted he will be with our prayers and alms, and all thoſe good and charitable actions, which manifeſt the purity and ſincerity of our faith in his beloved Son Jeſus, and adorn his ſweet and heavenly doctrine! In ſhort, faith and hope lead a man only to the gates,—But charity, the faireſt, and the greateſt of all virtues, crowns him with the everlaſting joys of Heaven.

Of what conſequence then the practice of charity is to all chriſtians, let all who maintain faith without any works, and if ever they do any good, do it to none but ſuch as are of their own perſuaſion, collect from their favourite Apoſtle's opinion, and praiſe of charity. And—if they will not regard this——I would have them be mindful of his weighty determination, who is far greater than all the Apoſtles, and all the preachers, and teachers that are, have been, and ever ſhall be; they have it in his moſt awful deſcription of the method of his proceeding in the day of judgment. Happy, yea thrice happy then will they be, who have ſhewn their faith by their works; who have believed in Chriſt, and loved him, *not in word, neither in tongue only, but in deed, and in truth.* But it makes me tremble to think—how it will fare with them, *who have boaſted of their faith, without works!*

I come

I come now,

4thly and laſtly, To conſider the good example of this ſociety, who let their light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee their good works, and glorify our Father who is in Heaven.

There cannot be a clearer evidence that God hath not yet withdrawn his grace and Holy Spirit from us, than the growth and encreaſe of public charities every where amongſt us. Of which, I believe, thoſe which are eſtabliſhed in this county, are not leſs beneficial and ornamental, than the reſt; leſs ſerviceable to, and worthy of the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. Amongſt the generous authors, and liberal promoters of them, who, like the propitious ſtars, ſhed their benign influence on the human race, this charitable ſociety ſhines with no leſs real glory and ſplendor, with the beautiful and divine light of faith, which is piety and beneficence. For, God be praiſed, ye, who are aſſembled here, upon this ſolemn occaſion, in the temple which bears his name, who teaches you that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world, i. e. in the ways of virtue, which are full of pleaſantneſs and peace, and will enable him both to be, and to do good; Behold! ye, who are now come to beg the divine bleſſing upon your good works and deſigns, begun, and continued, with the view of glorifying God, and relieving, comforting, and providing for, your poor diſtreſſed brethren, who cannot, without your timely aid and relief, help and ſupport themſelves; ye convince the world, that ye are his Diſciples, who hath

ſaid,

ſaid, if ye love me, keep my commandments; and this is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you: And, inaſmuch as ye have been kind and charitable unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have been ſo unto me.

Depend therefore upon receiving the bleſſing which ye aſk; even ſucceſs in this great and noble undertaking; which, not all the calamities and misfortunes, nor the continual encreaſing weight, and unwelcome, but unavoidable, impoſition of taxes, occaſioned by this moſt unhappy and expenſive war, can diſcourage you from perſiſting in your moſt hearty endeavours to promote, but ſtill, in the very midſt of theſe apparently inſurmountable difficulties, your patriotiſm, and your charity go hand in hand together, and ye contentedly debar yourſelves from many innocent delights and pleaſures, that ye may have it more and more in your power to contribute your part towards the benefit and ſervice of your country in general, and to the comfort and ſupport of your neceſſitous brethren, for whoſe ſake this moſt excellent and uſeful charity was inſtituted. I call *this* a moſt excellent and uſeful charity, becauſe the good end ye aim at by it, is well known to be, Firſt, the relief and ſuccour of poor women travelling with child, whoſe circumſtances will not afford them the comforts which their moſt diſtreſful condition muſt abſolutely require; and without which, both they, and their moſt helpleſs tender offſpring, muſt inevitably periſh. And, Secondly, the maintenance and proviſion for poor orphan boys, whom by placing them out to honeſt reputable trades and occupations, ye deliver from the ſnares and temptations of an idle life, and, moſt probably, from a diſgraceful, wretched end now, and a more miſerable one hereafter.

If this be not an exceedingly good deſign, I know not what is; and if theſe be not very fit and proper objects of our pity and compaſſion, I know not who are. Whoſoever then hath this world's good, and ſeeth a brother or ſiſter in ſuch need, and miſery, and pain, and ſhuteth up his bowels of compaſſion from them, it is a true ſign *that his faith worketh not by love*. But I perſuade myſelf that, not only the worthy members of this ſociety, who have made ready their alms beforehand, as a matter of bounty, and not of covetouſneſs; but that all preſent, who, I hope, have not diſdained to hear me patiently, who come to you, as St. Paul ſays, not with excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom, are of another, or a far better temper and diſpoſition.——That their faith makes them zealous of good works—that they do not ſuffer their riches to be corrupted, and their garments to be moth eaten; but are ready to diſtribute, and willing to communicate; laying up in ſtore, a good foundation for themſelves, againſt the time to come; that they may lay hold on eternal life.

To conclude,

Let us all, therefore, join together, moſt heartily and chearfully to encourage and promote this labour of love. Let us draw out our ſouls to our brother and to our ſiſter, who are naked and deſtitute of daily food:——Let us warm, and fill, and comfort them. ——And may your generous ſouls, unbiaſſed through any attachments to party, or private views, which deſtroy the ſpirit of charity, and quench the pure flame of public love, be perpetually refreſhed with theſe moſt comfortable and delightful thoughts;

when

when the ear heard me, then it bleſſed me; and when the eye ſaw me, it gave witneſs to me; becauſe I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherleſs, and him who had none to help him; the bleſſing of the poor mother, who was ready to periſh, came upon me, for I cauſed her to remember no more the ſorrowful anguiſh, for joy that a man was born into the world.

Theſe thoughts can only be the portion, and the property of the good and merciful, who have diſperſed abroad, (like the ſkilful ſowers, ſcattering ſeed for the future harveſt) and given to the poor; and they are an happy preſage, that their memories will continue to be bleſſed, and that their righteouſneſs ſhall remain for ever.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, three Perſons *of the ſame divine nature, and ſpiritual perfections*, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Honour, Glory, Praiſe, Might and Dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

*F I N I S.*

when the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him who had none to help him; the blessing of the poor mother, who was ready to perish, came upon me, for I caused her to remember no more the sorrowful anguish, for joy that a man was born into the world.

These thoughts can only be the portion, and the property of the good and merciful, who have dispersed abroad, (like the faithful sowers, scattering seed for the future harvest) and given to the poor; and they are an happy presage, that their memories will continue to be blessed, and that their righteousness shall remain for ever.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons of the same divine nature, and Spiritual perfection, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Glory, Praise, Might and Dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

20 JUL 63

FINIS